

Ely Air Lines –

A Calling with Wings

by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely

As far back as Richard Wilkins can recall, he has always wanted to fly. As a young boy in Cleveland, Ohio, he'd run outside and look up every time he heard an airplane. He wondered why he was so drawn to flight. A pastor once answered, "I don't know, but God will show you. He knit you together in your mother's womb, created you uniquely suited to do what only you can do. God plants the seed, and we are to grow and harvest the fruit."

He was fortunate to attend a high school that offered courses in airframe



and power plant mechanics, air traffic control, and other aviation fields. At 17, he moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, to attend the Spartan School of Aeronautics, where he earned his private, instrument, and commercial certificates while working full time to pay for tuition. That gave him an advantage over the vast majority of hopeful applicants in the U.S. Army flight program.

Warrant Officer Wilkins flew Chinooks. Trained by Vietnam-era pilots, he flew important and sometimes dangerous (low-level night) missions at the border between North and South Korea, in Honduras, and Guatemala. Chinooks were fun to fly, and he often mused, They pay me to do this! I'd do it for free!

But there were always two things he said he wanted to be when he grew up: a pilot and a doctor.

After ten years, he set down the helicopter and entered medical school, followed by another ten years of service as an Army doctor to soldiers and their families. After retirement, they didn't want to let go of him, so he agreed to stay on as a civilian physician, serving Army families another seventeen years.

These days, it's not unusual to see him landing or taking off from Liberty Municipal Airport in a Cessna 210 Centurian. But where is he going?

Through worship, prayer, fasting, and studying his Bible, he's learned how to plant – churches, that is.

While searching for answers to why he didn't see God's miraculous healing today as described in the Bible, he was led to the Friday night home church that would eventually become Encounter, across FM 160 from the main entrance to the Liberty airport. While helping to plant churches across the U.S., from Blythe, California to Dover, Delaware, and many places between, Dr. Wilkins has developed more faith in healing through prayer than through medicine. He describes witnessing the casting out of demons and healing from terminal illnesses, exactly what he had prayed to see, and credits God alone.

With all the places the church wanted to go to scout new locations and spread the Gospel, airline service wouldn't do. To be effective, they needed a time machine. One with wings. One kept close by and ready to fly on their schedule.

Today, when Dr. Wilkins lifts off from Liberty, he's not just flying – he's answering a calling that's been guiding him since childhood.

ElyAirLines.substack.com

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE FOR VETS

Veterans, surviving spouses, and dependents may all be eligible for free transportation services. If you need transportation to local or out of town medical appointments, lab visits, outpatient procedures or picking up prescriptions at the pharmacy, the RISE Center may be able to help. Contact the RISE Center at 409-832-2599 to find out more. A DD214 – Texas-issued, non-expired ID is required.

This program is supported by a grant from the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance. The Fund for Veterans' Assistance provides grants to organizations serving veterans and their families. For more information, visit tvf.texas.gov.



The beautiful princess with the sparkly shoes at right was joined for a quick photo with two of her friends at the Dayton ISD Special Education Winter Dance last Thursday.

FOR KOLARIK

COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 4

I Stand For

- Honesty/Integrity/Transparency
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Development Regulation Compliance/Enforcement
- Enhanced Funding/Method for Road Maintenance
- Prudent Tax Incentives for New Business

EARLY VOTING

Dayton Community Center • February 17-27 • 7am-7pm

ELECTION DAY - MARCH 3 - 7AM-7PM

BOX 10 EASTGATE

St. Anne's Catholic Church Parish Hall

BOX 21 - KENEFICK

Southern Baptist Church

BOX 22 - DAYTON

Dayton Community Center

BOX 25 - TARKINGTON

Tarkington Prairie Baptist Church

Pol. Adv. Paid for by Gerald Kolarik Campaign - Carol Kolarik, treasurer

Dayton Rotary welcomes RYLA attendees,

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conference, discussing lessons learned in teamwork, communication, ethics, and service.

A special thanks to former Rotary president Ann Marie Mitchell for once again assisting with the transportation of the RYLA students.

Members received an update on ongoing fundraising efforts, including ticket sales for the club's upcoming All-You-Can-Eat Gumbo Luncheon scheduled for February 20. Proceeds will support local community projects and scholarships. The drawing for the club's four-wheeler raffle

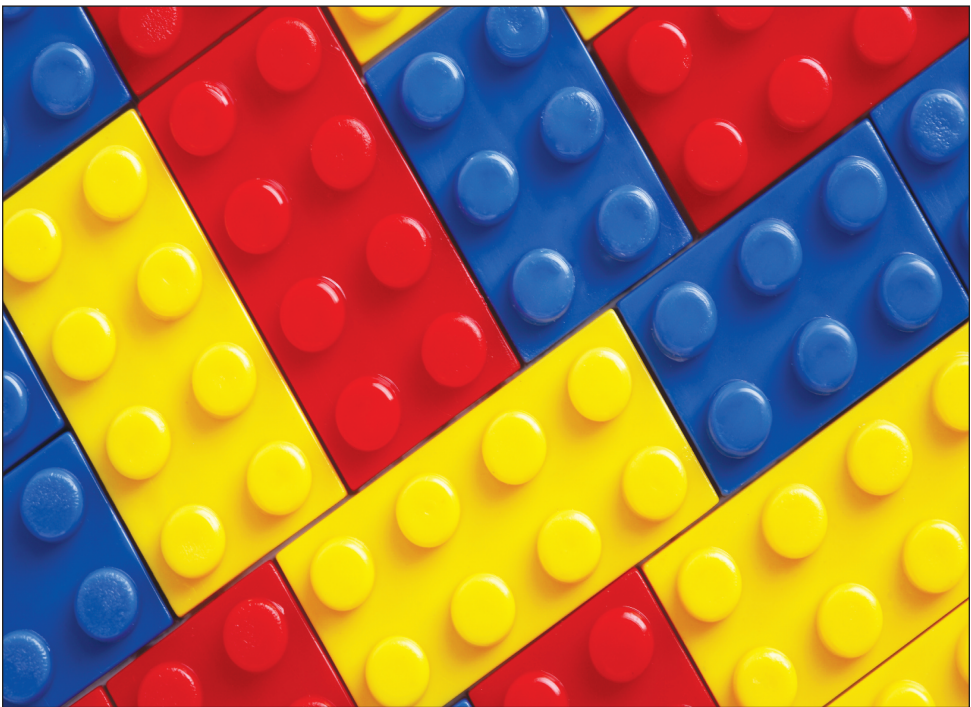
will also take place at the luncheon. Tickets for both the four-wheeler raffle and the annual gumbo luncheon can be purchased from any Rotary member.

Another community project that the club also discussed was the preparations for its second annual heater distribution initiative, Warm Hearts, Warm Homes. That event is scheduled for February 12. The project will provide free heaters to those in need within the community.

Additional updates included progress on the Rotary Club of Dayton's upcoming 100-year cele-

bration, which will be held on April 10 at the Community Center. Plans are underway for a historical presentation to the Dayton Historical Society later this spring, along with future community engagement activities highlighting Rotary's long-standing service to the area.

The meeting concluded with the recitation of the Four-Way Test. The Rotary Club of Dayton meets weekly and continues to support leadership development, service projects, and community involvement throughout Dayton and surrounding areas.



LEGO DAY AT LIBERTY MUNICIPAL LIBRARY

The library is hosting a four day-long event in honor of International LEGO Day beginning on January 28th through January 31st! Come in anytime during regular hours for a scavenger hunt, prizes, and more! There is no charge to participate in the program and the event is open to all ages including teens and adults.

For more information, please call us at 936-336-8901 or check us out on Facebook and Instagram! The library hours are currently, Monday through Thursday 9 to 5 p.m., Friday 1 to 5 p.m., and Saturday 10 to 4p.m.

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Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.



This special ed teacher gives a quick hug to one of her favorite people at the Dayton ISD Special Education Winter Dance last Thursday.